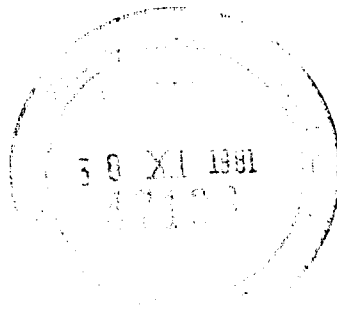


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the future of pastoral peoples

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**proceedings of a conference held in nairobi, kenya,
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the future of pastoral peoples

R.S. Musangi, *Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi, Kenya*

The future of pastoral peoples is very relevant to Kenya, and my colleagues and I look forward to the findings of this conference. To those of you who have come from outside Kenya, let me take this opportunity to welcome you and to wish you a pleasant stay in the country.

Pastoral development provides a unique opportunity to improve livestock industries, particularly for protein production in a world short of protein. It also provides an opportunity to examine the social and economic patterns of the pastoral areas, such as nomadism and collective use of resources. Great attention has, in the past, been given to agrarian development and relatively little to the pastoral sector. Yet in many countries of Africa and the Middle East, pastoral production constitutes a crucial component in local subsistence, a key commodity in export markets, and a substantial portion of national land. In Kenya, for example, a country noted for a well-established agricultural economy, more than 75% of the land is arid or semi-arid, exploited mainly by livestock producers.

Without preempting the outcome of discussions, I would like to suggest that this conference attempt to address two important issues in the development of pastoral peoples.

First, issues related to ethics and economics are frequently posed when it comes to pastoral development. Unfortunately, they are often cited to contrast development with tradition. They should be viewed in the context of transformation of land from mere rough grazing into systematic dry-land agriculture such as the transformation of herd management orientations from traditional subsistence systems to organized meat production and marketing.

Second, there is the obligation to protect the inherent rights and economic security of pastoral peoples, including their right to control their land and at the same time to develop within national goals.

Development for pastoral people is a social and political, as well as a technical, process and if the connotations of progress inherent in the notion of development are to be encouraged, there must be an increasing awareness of the need to learn from past mistakes and to change future orientations. In this respect, the role of technical and social research is indispensable. Universities must be actively involved in development through the research function of merging conceptual progress with practical realities.

The program of this conference, which recognizes the international scope of the problem of pastoral development, is primarily to enhance interchange between three groups with distinctive roles:

- Academic researchers with specialized concern with pastoralism, from the social scientific perspectives;
- Representatives of research institutes with much broader development responsibilities; and
- Personnel associated with national and international agencies charged with practical tasks of development.

The orientations of these three groups may never be identical, or even in harmony, because their aims and obligations differ. It is, however, expected that all must work to ensure that such orientations as the theoretic and applied, the social and the technical, single problems versus integrated frameworks, or even long- versus short-run perspectives serve as mutually complementing and stimulating views, rather than isolated poles.

A problem such as pastoral development is intrinsically interdisciplinary. The links between disciplines, as well as levels of orientation, should be optimally reflected in the dialogue at a conference like this where it is also expected that a synthesis of views will be developed. Certainly, the general social scientific tradition of intensive field research in an important area of pastoralism, with attention given to the perspectives of people defined as social units, should be challenged to broaden itself through taking account of other important disciplines such as range management, agricultural economics, geography, and ecology, which contribute to the understanding of pastoral development.

Finally, the topics of the conference represent substantive areas of research, none of which are planted within any one discipline but which can benefit from the contributions of many fields. The interdisciplinary view is served by collaboration between individuals of different expertise and by the openness of individuals to diverse currents of problem orientation and theory. As the conference moves to define the priorities for research, I hope that contributions tally with the demands for the solution of the problems and that the conference will serve to crystalize points of agreement as well as differences, if not on solutions and approaches, at least on the problems that lie at the heart of the development of the crucial but complex pastoral sector.

In conclusion, I wish this conference great success and I now have pleasure in declaring it open.